To the Com on For. Miss.
Soc of Inquiry
Theol Sem Princeton

Ningpo July 30th 1849

Dear Brethren

When I was in the Sem I thought that one of the first things I should do when I arrived on missionary ground would be to write back to my friends in the Sem. & now when I have arrived, one of my most prominent desires is to hear from them. In writing to you, so short a time after arriving at my place of destination, I cannot of course give you so much or so accurate information, as those who have been longer in the field. There are many subjects upon wh I fal it would be interesting to communicate to you, such as the moral & religious ideas of this people, their ideas of God, of sin &c what these ideas are, & how far they agree with the truth. But these are subjects wh I have not yet investigated myself & I must content myself with giving you those facts wh I have picked up thus far more as a traveller than a missionary.

Myself & wife arrived here on the 13th of June just 2 months after we landed at Hongkong. At present travelling up & down the coast is often attended with a good deal of difficulty & delay. The most regular communication along the coast is by means of opium clippers, but these seldom take passengers especially when going up the coast. The merchant ships generally go from Hongkong direct to Shanghai wh has the most foreign trade of any of the northern ports. We expected to have gone to Shanghai when we first left Hongkong & took passage for that place in the Valparaiso wh was to stop at Amoy for a cargo of sugar. As we were leaving the harbor of Amoy & before we were out to sea, the vessel struck on a rock & was so much damaged as not to be able to proceed on her voyage. We were detained 2 months & a half waiting at Amoy for another opportunity & then took passage to Shanghai in a ship wh had been chartered to take the cargo of the Valparaiso to that place. When we ~~were sailing~~ ~~had arrived~~ however ~~at~~ amoy the islands North East of Chusan we espied a "lorcha" (a kind of craft part Portugese & part Chinese) under lee of one of the islands wh the Capt sent his boat after & hired to take us to Ningpo. This was a very favorable opportunity as it saved another journey from Shanghai to Ningpo wh might have cost us another delay of 2 or 3 months. It is to be hoped that many of the difficulties & delays at present experienced in going up & down the coast will be obviated in a few months by the establishment of a regular line of steamers between Hongkong & Shanghai wh will touch at the intermediate ports. If delays however are unpleasant in other respects, there is at least one advantage, they afford an opportunity of becoming acquainted with other missionaries & their different fields of labor. What I propose in the present letter is to give you a brief summary of facts in connection with the

different missionary stations wh I have visited. The first land upon wh we set our feet after leaving New York was the island of Boro. This is one of the central islands in the archipelago South East of Asia. It is not far from Amboyna & like it is held in possession by the Dutch. While on shore we were at the Governor's house who is half Dutch & half malay. There is a fort & a few troops on the island. The inhabitants, (of whom there are 40,000) are mostly Malays & Mohammedans in their religious belief. Though they do not appear to be very tenacious of their opinions. The Dutch have a missionary station here occupied by a native teacher. He had a school of about 40 children under his charge. This station is visited occasionly by one of the European missionaries residing at Amboyna. At present little appears to be doing for the spiritual benefit of the numerous islanders in this archipelago. When ~~they~~ for those islands wh are held by the Dutch first came into their possession, about 2 centuries ago, missionary operations were carried on among the natives with a good deal of zeal & apparently with considerable success. But after a time their efforts were relaxed & now there are but few even nominal converts. The field for labor is certainly an interesting one. Some of the islands are large & thickly populated. & the Dutch or missionaries from other countries under their protection, might carry on their operations to most any extent. The natural scenery of the islands as you sail along among them is very beautiful. The vegetation is rich & luxuriant reaching from the water's edge to the tops of the highest mountains. In this respect it contrasts strongly with the coast of China wh presents on your approach to it a very barren & forbidding appearance.

In China we first landed at Hong Kong wh is by far more of a European than a Chinese town. The shipping, houses churches barracks ~~for soldiers~~, stores printing offices all show the impress of European civilization. and the Chinese themselves who crowd around you eager for employment address you in your own tongue. It is not however without its importance as a missionary station. The English Episcopal, the London Miss Soc'y & the Southern Baptist Board, all have stations there. They all I think have outstations on the mainland & neighboring islands. When we were at Hongkong it was expected that the Morrison Education Society would cease its operations Its affairs had become somewhat involved & most of its early friends have returned home or are among the dead. On some accounts it is perhaps desirable that it should not be continued as the trustees are many of them religious men & teachers may be introduced who shall exert anything but a religious influence. Hitherto this has not been the case; but in the mode of conducting its operations there is little guarantee for the future. We were at Canton but a short time. While there the missionaries of our Board formed themselves into a Presbytery. Most of the missionaries from the other societies were present. As you are aware the missionaries at Canton have to labor against a strong prejudice felt towards foreigners. It is well however to set up

among them a different standard than that of merely commercial intercourse. The influence of wh is already felt to some degree. The missionaries can now live outside the factories though they have to pay an exorbitant rent for their houses. The merchants have recently built a neat little chapel in front of the factories. The Seaman's Chaplain Mr Loomis was also endeavoring to raise funds, among them & from the foreign shipping, to build a floating chapel at Whampoa 12 miles below Canton where the foreign vessels lie at anchor. He thought he should be able to accomplish the undertaking this summer. These efforts are to be hailed with pleasure ~~as~~ for if ~~the~~ foreign merchants & seamen would only show an attachment to the principles of Christianity many of the objections urged by the heathen would be done away with, & the missionary would no longer consider it a privilege as he does now to get away from the influence of commercial intercourse.

Amoy was the next place wh we visited. Bro. Lolyd had died 3 months before our arrival & the mission of our Board was left without any representative. Mr Pohlman was wrecked on the coast 2 months before & Mr Talmage left for America while we were there, so that Mr Doty was left the only Am. missionary. Besides him there are two ministers of the London miss Society & a physician recently arrived. We were favorably disappointed with respect to Amoy, having received unfavorable impressions of the healthiness of the place, wh had been strengthened by the ~~death~~ intelligence of the death of Mr Lolyd. Kolangsu the island opposite Amoy was undoubtedly unhealthy when occupied by the English partly on account of the uncultivated rice fields on the island & partly from the low damp houses in wh they lived. And this former unhealthiness of ~~Amoy~~ Kolangsu has been transferred to Amoy. But the place presents some obvious advantages for health 1st The country around is high & hilly wh can be said of none of the other ports. 2d They have a fine harbor near the sea wh gives them the advantage of a good sea breeze. There is also a short distance below the city a fine sea beach favorable both for exercise & bathing. The general health of the missionaries has also been good since they have lived at Amoy & would undoubtedly have been better if they had had more suitable houses. The people at Amoy are friendly & favorably disposed as indeed they are at all the ports except Canton. The Am Board have a chapel a little larger than your Stone chapel wh is well filled on the Sabbath; many of them, about one third, are quite regular in their attendance. The chapel is also open for Bible class twice during the week. Amoy however is the smallest of the open cities & has the reputation of being the filthiest. Its inland commerce is extensive & 40 miles up the river there is a large & fine city where there is a great deal of silk woven & ~~sugar~~ sugar manufactured.

Ningpo is larger than Amoy & its streets are wider cleaner & straighter. It is farther from the sea & has not so good a harbor. It is also on a plain with the hills on each side about 10 miles distant. There are here 2 missionaries from the Ch of England 2 from the English Baptist Bd 3 from the Am Southern Bap'st Bd & 6 of our own Board & with Mr Rankin & Coulter whom we

expect in a few days. There are also one or two Roman Catholic Missionaries. A few days since I arrived who are expecting to go to Mongolia through the interior. All of the older missionaries have tried living within the City walls, but they have found it very hot in the summer season & unhealthy. All of our own Board live on the bank of the river opposite the City. Thus far the Thermometer has not been in the middle of the day above 95° & has always been tempered with a pleasant breeze. It has also been found expedient to build new houses as those built by the Chinese besides being unsuited to our tastes are unhealthy. They are very damp in the rainy season & bring on diseases which unfits the constitution to bear the heat of summer. Most of the missionaries have however enjoyed very good health. Mr Dennis of our Bd is not well & is at present absent at Chusan. All the missionaries here except myself, are able to preach to this people in their own language. They all have regular services on the Sabbath, besides preaching 2 or 3 times during the week. The schools also are well sustained. Mr Way has charge of the boarding school for boys in our mission which numbers about 30 scholars. Miss Aldersey an English lady has about 30 girls in her school. Most of the foreign residents at Ningpo besides the missionaries are those connected with the Consulate. But the number of mission families affords us a very pleasant little community of our own. The trade of the northern ports has been concentrated at Shanghae, which also has the greatest number of missionaries. The Committee also who are engaged in the translation of the Bible are assembled there. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the time when they will finish their labors; probably not for 2 years to come. They have a difficult task in fixing upon the proper terms to represent Scripture ideas, as has already been exhibited in the discussion about the right term to be used for God.

I have only to assure you of my continued interest in your Society. We often think of you & as our eyes are brought to see more of the field white for the harvest, we are led to pray to the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers into his harvest. May he direct each one of you into that sphere of labor where you can accomplish the most for his glory. I shall always be glad to hear from you & to answer your letters. Be not afraid of telling news which you suppose we may have from other sources; for often we do not hear it & even if we do it is pleasant to have those things which are interesting to us, presented to our view by different pens.

If one who has so recently arrived on missionary ground may be allowed to add one parting word of advice it would be this. Be faithful in present duty. Ever be aspired no gift or grace & no store of knowledge is ever lost to its owner on missionary ground.

Yours sincerely Joseph K. Wright